



June 10, 2011

**Sacramento makes final preparations for WMA event;
World masters track championships take place July 6-17**

More than 4,800 athletes from 93 countries, ranging in age from 35 to 101, have entered the 19th World Masters Athletics (WMA) Outdoor Stadium Championships in Sacramento. The international track and field event will be held July 6-17.

This marks the first time in 16 years that the biennial event has been held in the United States. In addition to showcasing age-group athletes from around the world, the WMA Championships will provide the capital region with an estimated economic benefit of \$23 million, according to the Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The Sacramento Sports Commission has been preparing for next month's competition for nearly four years. Sacramento was awarded the event at the 2007 WMA Championships in Riccione, Italy.

"We want to showcase Sacramento in the best possible light while also providing the athletes with the facilities and organization needed to perform at their best," said John McCasey, executive director of the Sacramento Sports Commission and chairman of the local organizing committee.

"We've got a great team in place. I think it will be a tremendous event."

Of the 4,804 registered athletes, 1,915 are from the United States. Canada has the second-largest group of entrants with 215, followed by Germany (212), India (210), Great Britain and Northern Ireland (195), Mexico (194),

Australia (164), France (125) and Italy (101).

Eleven of the 93 countries represented in Sacramento have one entrant apiece, including Senegal, Belize, Fiji, Liberia, Paraguay and U.S. Virgin Islands.

There will be no admission charge for spectators.

In nine days of competition – July 10 and 14 are rest days – 937 age-group events will be held at six separate venues. The local organizing committee implemented a “split day schedule” to minimize the potential impact of high afternoon temperatures. Each morning session will begin at approximately 9 a.m. and continue to 2 p.m. The evening schedule is 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

More than 80 percent of the 2011 WMA events will be held at Hornet Stadium on the Sacramento State campus. Hornet Stadium served as the site for the 2000 and 2004 U.S. Olympic Trials as well as four NCAA Division I Men’s and Women’s Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

Sacramento City College’s Hughes Stadium and American River College’s Beaver Stadium will serve the secondary venues for the 2011 WMA Championships. Hughes Stadium has hosted three U.S. championships, and Beaver Stadium hosted numerous Golden West Invitational high school meets.

Granite Regional Park is the site of the cross country races on July 6 and July 7. The marathon will be held July 17 on the American River Parkway. The road race walking events will be held in Land Park on July 12 and July 16.

A complete schedule of events is posted online at www.wma2011.com.

Some of the most decorated athletes in masters track and field will participate, including Phil Raschker, a 64-year-old from Marietta, Ga., a two-time finalist for the Sullivan Award who has won 68 gold medals in WMA championship competition since 1983; Irene Obera, a 77-year-old sprinter from Fremont, Ca., the winner of dozens of national and world titles, including the women’s 75-79 100 and 200 meters at last summer’s USA Masters Outdoor Championships in Sacramento; and Olga Kotenko, a 92-year-old marvel from British Columbia who holds every world record in

her age class.

Olympians who have entered next month's WMA event include:

- South Africa's Zola Pieterse (nee Budd), the teenage prodigy who set several world records and was involved in the infamous tripping incident with Mary Decker Slaney at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. Pieterse will compete in women's cross country in Sacramento.
- Willie Banks, the former world record holder in the men's triple jump and a member of three U.S. Olympic teams;
- Jearl Clark, a two-time Olympic gold medalist and five-time Olympian who is a member of the USATF Hall of Fame;
- Duncan Macdonald, a former U.S. record holder in the 5,000 meters;
- Al Joyner, the 1984 Olympic champion in the triple jump;
- Ed Burke, a three-time Olympian who carried the U.S. flag during the opening ceremonies at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles;
- Mohinder Gill, a world-ranked triple jumper in the early 1970s from India who competed collegiately for Cal Poly San Luis Obispo; and
- Hans Lagerqvist, a Swede who was one of the world's top pole vaulters in the 1970s.

Top Sacramento-area entrants include:

- Liz Palmer (Folsom), who will be one of the favorites in the W50 sprints and hurdles;
- Kevin Morning (Roseville), a former world record holder in the M45 200 meters and double gold medalist at the 1997 and 2001 WMA Championships;
- John Mansoor (El Dorado Hills), the longtime race director of the California International Marathon who will compete in M55 distance events; and
- Rod Jett (Sacramento), a former Hiram Johnson High School and University of California hurdler who now coaches track at Jesuit High School.

More than 500 people have signed up to volunteer at the WMA Championships. The Sacramento Sports Commission is still accepting volunteer sign-ups at www.wma2011.com. Call (916) 808-2400 for more information.

More than a dozen Sacramento-area companies and organizations are sponsoring the WMA Championships: Sutter Health, Sacramento Airport Systems; Pepsi; Sacramento State; the City and County of Sacramento; the Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau; Sacramento City College; American River College; the Sacramento City and County park and recreation districts; Regional Transit; Yellow Cab; and Dome Printing.

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Yup, **Zola Budd** is entered at Sacramento — in the W45 5000 and 8K cross country race. Yowza. She's a legend for her 5K world record at age 17 (when she ran barefoot) and for a little pileup at the Los Angeles Games 3K with **Mary Decker** (a race I witnessed in person, BTW). But no tripping jokes here. Just respect and appreciation for a mom (who took the last name of hubby **Mike Pieterse**). Wikipedia says: "Budd and her family have been living in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, USA since August 2008. She has a two-year visa that allows her to compete on the U.S. masters' circuit, is a volunteer coach at Coastal Carolina University Chanticleers track team and has raced in the South Carolina division of USA Track and Field, winning the women's division of the Dasani Half-Marathon during Bi-Lo Myrtle Beach Marathon on 14 February 2009 with a time of 1:20:41."